

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO
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INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 4096

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS, EC
SUBJECT: GOE UPSET BY SAN JOSE TUNA MEETING

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. SENIOR FONOFF OFFICIAL EXPRESSED HIS CONCERN TO CHARGE ABOUT IMPLICATIONS OF SAN JOSE CONSULTATIVE MEETING TO DISCUSS NEW TUNA FISHING REGIME. HE PERCEIVED A MOVEMENT TOWARD A REGIONAL FISHING AGREEMENT IN THE FORMATION OF WHICH ECUADOR AND PERU WOULD HAVE NO HAND AND WHICH THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO JOIN. GOE IS HURT BY US ATTITUDE AND EMB RECOMMENDS THAT A BETTER EFFORT BE MADE TO INCLUDE ECUADOR AND PERU IN THESE FORA. END SUMMARY.

2. SR. FOREIGN MINISTRY ADVISOR AMBASSADOR LUIS PONCE ENRIQUEZ REQUESTED A MEETING WITH CHARGE ON JUNE 12 TO DISCUSS THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN MOVES TOWARD THE REPLACEMENT OF THE PRESENT INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION SYSTEM WITH A NEW AGREEMENT. POLCOUNS ACCOMPANIED CHARGE TO THE
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APPOINTMENT.

3. PONCE RELATED THAT HE HAD BEEN DISTURBED BY A CONVERSATION THAT HE HAD RECENTLY IN GENEVA WITH AMBASSADOR JORGE CASTANEDA, MEXICAN DELEGATE TO THE LOS CONFERENCE, IN WHICH CASTANEDA REMARKED THAT A USG OFFICIAL HAD TOLD HIM THAT USG HAD DETERMINED THERE WAS NO WAY USG COULD

ACCOMMODATE GOE POSITION REGARDING A REGIONAL TUNA AGREEMENT. PONCE SAID THIS COMMENT HAD COME AS A COMPLETE SURPRISE, SINCE HIS IMPRESSION FOLLOWING THE VISIT OF THE USG TEAM (FINAN/BLONDIN/HALLMAN) IN JANUARY WAS THAT THE USG AND THE GOE SHARED ALMOST COMPLETELY IDEAS CONCERNING THE OBJECTIVES OF A REGIONAL AGREEMENT, EVEN WHILE THEY ACKNOWLEDGED DIFFERENCES IN HANDLING THE MODALITIES BECAUSE OF DIFFERENT JURIDICAL POSITIONS.

4. PONCE SAID HE HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT DUBIOUS INITIALLY ABOUT CASTANEDA'S ASSESSMENT, BUT NOW THAT HE HAD LEARNED THAT THE US WOULD PARTICIPATE IN A FISHING CONFERENCE IN SAN JOSE IN LATE JUNE, HE ASSUMED THAT THE US WAS PROCEEDING ON THE BASIS OF THE PRINCIPLES OUTLINED AT THE SEPTEMBER 1977 SAN JOSE MEETING.

5. CHARGE EXPLAINED THAT THE SAN JOSE CONSULTATION LATER THIS MONTH WAS BEING HELD BECAUSE OF THE COINCIDENCE OF COSTA RICAN ENFORCEMENT OF ITS FISHING LAW AGAINST US TUNA FISHERMEN AND THE DENUNCIATION OF IATTC AGREEMENT BY COSTA RICA AND MEXICO, PARTICULARLY THE LATTER. IF SOME SORT OF TRANSITORY OR SUBSTITUTE AGREEMENT WERE NOT ACHIEVED BEFORE THE 1979 SEASON, ANARCHY WOULD PREVAIL AND FISHING STOCKS MIGHT BE IRREPARABLY DEPLETED. IT WAS, HE SAID, ESSENTIALLY A CONSULTATION DESIGNED TO RESOLVE A SHORT-TERM CRISIS.
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6. PONCE DECLARED THAT HE APPRECIATED THE BACKGROUND. HOWEVER, NO MATTER WHAT THE SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVE WAS, THE DECISIONS MADE AT SAN JOSE IN JUNE AND AT ANY FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE, UNDER OR OUTSIDE OF THE IATTC RUBRIC, WOULD LIKELY HAVE IMPLICATIONS OF A MORE PERMANENT NATURE. IT WAS UNFORTUNATE, HE SAID, THAT ECUADOR WOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN SUCH DISCUSSIONS AND WOULD NOT BE AFFORDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT ITS POSITION FOR CONSIDERATION. ECUADOR, HE EMPHASIZED, COULD NEVER ACCEPT MANY OF THE FORMULATIONS PROPOSED AT THE SAN JOSE PRELIMINARY MEETING AND WOULD HAVE TO STAY OUT OF ANY ORGANIZATION FORMED ON THE BASIS OF THESE PRINCIPLES. AT THE SAME TIME, ECUADOR WAS KEENLY AWARE OF THE NEED FOR AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT WHOSE PRINCIPAL AIM WAS CONSERVATION AND WHOSE SECRETARIAT WOULD OPERATE INDEPENDENT OF NATIONAL OR COMMERCIAL PRESSURES TO ACHIEVE THIS END. HE COMMENTED THAT IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF DEVELOPMENTS WOULD LEAD TO TWO DISTINCT REGIMES FOR TUNA CONSERVATION AND FISHING IN THE EASTERN PACIFIC.

7. PONCE CONCLUDED THAT PERHAPS ECUADOR AND PERU HAD

TAKEN TOO PASSIVE A ROLE IN ENDORSING A TREATY. IF SO, THE GOE SHOULD PROBABLY EXAMINE THE POSSIBILITY OF PROMOTING A MORE OPEN-ENDED CONSULTATIVE MEETING WHICH MIGHT ACHIEVE A CONSENSUS. HOWEVER, ECUADOR SHOULD ALSO STUDY HOW TO MAKE ITS PRESENCE FELT AT MEETINGS OF THE SAN JOSE GROUP, PERHAPS THROUGH APPLICATION FOR OBSERVER STATUS. EMBOFFS WERE NON-COMMITTAL ON THIS.

8. COMMENT: GOE HAS BEEN SUSPICIOUS OF MEXICAN ACTIONS AND MOTIVES ON NEW TUNA TREATY FOR SOME TIME, BUT HAD LOOKED TO THE US AS POSSIBLE ALLY OR FRIEND AT COURT IN THESE DEALINGS. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT USG OFFICIALS MIGHT HAVE TOLD CASTANEDA ABOUT US-ECUADOREAN DIFFERENCES, THE VERSION THAT HE RELATED TO PONCE HAD THE EFFECT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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RAISING SUSPICIONS ABOUT US MOTIVES AND OBJECTIVES. EMBOFFS ATTEMPTED TO BE AS CANDID AND AS HELPFUL WITH PONCE AS THEY COULD DURING CONVERSATION IN ORDER TO ALLAY PONCE'S DOUBTS. NEVERTHELESS, GOE IS SOMEWHAT HURT AND RATHER BEWILDERED ABOUT US MOVES, AND IF WE ARE TO ASSURE OURSELVES OF CONTINUED ECUADOREAN COOPERATION ON THE PRACTICAL PROBLEMS OF FISHING HERE, WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE SOME SOOTHING GESTURES. UNLESS WE HAVE ALREADY DECIDED THAT AGREEMENT WITH THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC NATIONS IS NOT POSSIBLE AND ARE WILLING TO SEEK A TREATY IN WHICH THESE COUNTRIES DO NOT PARTICIPATE, WE SHOULD SEEK A WAY TO GIVE ECUADOR AND PERU A MORE LEGITIMATE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT THEIR POSITIONS THAN HAS THUS FAR BEEN THE CASE. IF NOT, WE COULD LIKELY ARRIVE AT A SITUATION WHERE SOME SORT OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT IS ACHIEVED WITHOUT ECUADOR AND PERU RESULTING IN THE TRIGGERING OF THE COERCIVE PROVISIONS OF THE US FISHING ACT AND CONSEQUENT BILATERAL PROBLEMS.
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